DUTCH NOUNS

An introduction to Dutch nouns

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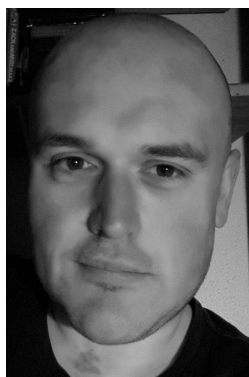
Contents

Part I. Introduction to the tutorial

1 Prologue

This tutorial was initially written as a 101 for Dutch noun pluralisation aimed for those in possession of basic Dutch skills. Although, due to the desire to be more detailed and to satisfy my longing for completeness this tutorial can not be classified as an introduction any longer.

In this tutorial I have tried to make the Dutch noun pluralisation rules and all aspects of Dutch noun spelling accessible for second language learners. In some cases I even felt it was also necessary to explain the process of singularisation of a plural noun.

I realise that the spelling differences that occur due to phonetic changes may be experienced as complex and vexatious. But the great joy of finally mastering the nearly completely unconscious applied techniques used by native speakers is extremely satisfying and rewarding.

I would like to grab the opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to my personal friend and inspirator Mr. J.D. Kees Koomen who made the realisation of this tutorial possible through his excellent guidance and technical support.

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2   IPA [aɪ pʰɪː eɪ] (*International Phonetic Alphabet*)

The *International Phonetic Alphabet* is used in this tutorial to clarify the pronunciation of certain vowels, particles, syllables or entire words. I've chosen to not use it too extensively. Because it might be distracting to especially the layman.

The International Phonetic Alphabet (in short: *IPA*) is an alphabetic system of phonetic notation based primarily on the Latin alphabet. It was devised by the International Phonetic Association as a standardised representation of the sounds of oral language. The IPA is used by lexicographers, foreign language students and teachers, linguists, speech-language pathologists, singers, actors, constructed language creators, and translators.

If you like to read to more about the International Phonetic Alphabet then you might start with the Wikipedia article about the IPA.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Phonetic_Alphabet

3   Elimentary Dutch phonetics

Many second language learners of the Dutch language state that the pronunciation of the language is perhaps the most challenging aspect. It's unavoidable for a second language learner, who is studying Dutch, to obtain some basic knowledge about phonetics in order to learn and to subsequently master the language. In order to learn Dutch it is essential to learn the vowels and to recognise the difference between long and short vowel sounds.

These two charts show the pronunciation of Dutch vowels and vowel diphthongs.

short or long	vowel	IPA	Dutch Example	IPA	English translation	approximated sound in English
short	a	[ɑ]	bad	[bɑt]	bath	bath
long	a / aa	[a] / [aː]*	aap	[aːp]	ape / monkey	hat
short	e	[ɛ]	bed	[bɛt]	bed	bed
short	e	[ə]	de	[də]	the	the
long	e / ee	[e] / [eː]* / [eɪ]	zee	[zeː] / [zeɪ]	sea	play
short	i	[ɪ]	kip	[kɪp]	chicken	bit
long	ie	[i] / [iː]*	bier	[biːr]	beer	free
short	o	[ɔ]	bot	[bɔt]	bone	bomb
long	o / oo	[o] / [oː]* / [oʊ]	boot	[boːt] / [boʊt]	boat	go!
short	u	≈ [ʏ]	kus	≈ [kʏs]	kiss	bird
long	u / uu	[y] / [yː]*	vuur	[vyːr]	fire	few
long	y	[i] / [iː]*	baby	[ˈbeɪ.bi]	baby	baby
-	oe	[u]	boer	[buːr]	farmer	foot

3.1   Vowel digraphs

This chart shows the vowel digraphs in Dutch.

digraphs	IPA	Dutch example	IPA	English translation
au	[ɑu] / [ɔu]	dauw	[dɑu] / [dɔu]	dew
ou	[ɑu] / [ɔu]	koud	[kɑut] / [kɔut]	cold
ei	[ɛi] / [ɛi̯]	trein	[trɛin] / [trɛi̯n]	train
ij	[ɛi] / [ɛi̯]	rijst	[rɛist] / [rɛi̯st]	rice
eu	[øʏ] / [øː]*	neus	[nøʏs] / [nøːs]	nose
ui	[ɐy] / [œy]	trui	[trɐy] / [trœy]	sweater

Digraphs are only partly capitalised; this means only the first letter of the digraph is capitalised. The digraph *ij* forms an exception and is always completely capitalised when capitalisation is necessary. Thus in Dutch one writes: *IJsland* (Iceland), *IJzer* (iron), *IJdelheid* (vanity), etc.

3.2 Consonants

consonant	IPA	Dutch Example	IPA	English translation
b	[b]	bad	[bɑt]	bath
c	[s]	cent	[sɛnt]	cent
	[k]	contract	[ˈkɔn.tʀɑkt]	contract
d	[d]	dag	[dɑɣ]	day
f	[f]	fiets	[fits]	bicycle
g	[j] / [ɣ]	gat	[jɑt] / [ɣɑt]	hole
h	[ɦ]	hut	[ɦʏt]	hut
j	[j]	jas	[jɑs]	jacket
j	[ʒ]	jury	[ˈʒyː.ʁi]	jury
k	[k]	kat	[kɑt]	cat
l	[l]	land	[lɑnt]	land
m	[m]	man	[mɑn]	man
n	[n]	nacht	[nɑχt]	night
p	[p]	pen	[pɛn]	pen
q	[kʋ]	quotum	[ˈkʋoː.tʏm]	quota
	[r]	rat	[rɑt]	rat
	[ʀ]	raad	[ʀaːt]	council
r	[ɾ]	rumoer	[ˈʀyː.muɾ]	noise
	[ɹ]	Nederlander	[ˈneɪ̯.də.ˌlɑn.dəɹ]	Dutchman
	[ʁ]	leer	[leːʁ]	leather
s	[s]	ster	[stɛr]	star
t	[t]	touw	[tɔu]	rope
v	[v]	vlees	[vleːs]	meat
w	[ʋ]	wijn	[ʋɛin]	wine
x	[ks]	xantippe	[ˈksɑn.tɪp.ə]	xanthippe
y	[j]	yoghurt	[ˈjoɣ.ᶠʏrt]	yoghurt
z	[z]	zee	[zeɪ̯]	sea

3.3   Consonant digraphs

This chart shows the consonant digraphs in Dutch.

digraph	IPA	Dutch Example	IPA	English translation
	[x̠] / [x]	chloor	[x̠loːɾ]	chlorine
ch	[ʃ]	chocolade	[ˌʃo.ko.ˈlɑ.də]	chocolate
	[k]	christendom	[krɪs.tə(n).dɔm]	christianity
ng	[ŋ]	tong	[tɔŋ]	tongue
nk	[ŋk]	bank	[baŋk]	bank

ch is pronounced either as: x̠, x, ʃ or k.

1. It's pronounced as: [x̠] or [x] when followed by: *l*, *o* ([ɔ] or [oː]), *r* or *y*.

2. It's pronounced as: [ʃ] when followed by: *a* [ɑ], *au*, *e* ([ɛ] or [eː]), *i* ([ɪ] or [iː]) or *o* ([oː]).

3. It's pronounced as: [k] when followed by: [rɪ].

4   Articles and demonstratives in combination with nouns

4.1   The articles: de, het and een

In English there are three articles: *the*, *a* and *an*. The article *the* is a definite article and the articles: *a* and *an* are indefinite articles. In Dutch there are three articles as well. These are: *de* [də], *het* [ɦɛt] and *een* [ən]; the first two are definite articles (*de* and *het*), the latter one (*een*) is an indefinite article. The article *de* is used for **both** masculine and feminine nouns. While *het* is used for neuter nouns. The difference between masculine and feminine nouns is not very clear in Dutch; neither very crucial. The indefinite article *een* is used for all grammatical genders but only for nouns in their singular form. There is not a plural indefinite article in Dutch like in some Romance and Northern Germanic languages.

de is by far the most used definite article in Dutch. This means most nouns are so called: *de-nouns*. The article is used for roughly 75% of all nouns. In case one is not sure about a noun's gender, *de* is a fairly safe bet. It even gets easier when the noun is in plural. A plural noun always gets the definite article *de*; even *het-nouns.*

	♂/ ♀	neuter	
definite	de	het	**singular**
indefinite	een		
definite	de		**plural**

Some examples of Dutch nouns, with their respective definite articles, in its singular form and the article: *de* preceding its plural form. The indefinite article: *een* can be placed in front of every singular noun; irrespective its gender.

noun gender	Dutch example indefinite article	Dutch example singular noun	English translation	Dutch example plural noun
m	een hond	de hond	the dog	de honden
n	een boek	het boek	the book	de boeken
f	een zon	de zon	the sun	de zonnen
n	een wiel	het wiel	the wheel	de wielen
f	een maagd	de maagd	the virgin	de maagden
m	een stoel	de stoel	the chair	de stoelen

m = masculine; f = feminine; n = neutral

4.2   The demonstratives: deze, dit, die and dat

Demonstratives are used to indicate a certain grammatical object. This can either be about an object, person or animal that is physically in one's environment (*nearby* or *at distance*) or about abstract concepts. In English these are simply: *this* and *that*, with their plural counterparts: *these* and *those*.

In Dutch there is a distinction made between the grammatical gender of a demonstrative and whether the object is nearby or at distance. There is no real difference between demonstratives for nouns in their respective singular or plural forms. The demonstratives: *deze* [ˈdeː.zə] and *die* [di] are always used to indicate nouns in their plural form; irrespective whether it is a *de-noun* or a *het-noun*.

	♂ / ♀	neuter	English	
nearby	deze	dit	this	**singular**
at distance	die	dat	that	
nearby	deze		these	**plural**
at distance	die		those	

The demonstratives *dit* [dɪt] and *dat* [dɑt] are used for singular neuter nouns. Thus the *book* which is nearby on the table is: *dit boek* and the book which is on the bookshelf at a further distance is: *dat boek*. Also singular diminutives are preceded by: *dit* and *dat*; irrespective whether it is a *de-noun* or a *het-noun*. However, plural diminutives are preceded by: *deze* and *die*.

English noun	house	motorcar	city
Dutch noun	huis	auto	stad
noun gender	*n*	*m*	*f*
definite article	het	de	de
indefinite article	een	een	een
this ...	dit huis	deze auto	deze stad
that ...	dat huis	die auto	die stad
these ...	deze huizen	deze auto's	deze steden
those ...	die huizen	die auto's	die steden
diminutive	huisje	autootje	stadje
this ...	dit huisje	dit autootje	dit stadje
that ...	dat huisje	dat autootje	dat stadje
these ...	deze huisjes	deze autootjes	deze stadjes
those ...	die huisjes	die autootjes	die stadjes

4.3   Articles and diminutives

In Dutch there is a particular interesting form of the noun which is called: diminutive. A diminutive expresses smallness of an object. Diminutives are seldom used in English. Smallness is usually expressed with an adjective like: *little* or *small*. In Dutch diminutives are formed by adding a suffix to a noun. These diminutive suffixes are: *-je*, *-tje*, *-etje*, *-pje* or *-kje*. When a noun is transformed into a diminutive it gets the definite article *het*. But when the diminutive is used in its plural form it always gets the definite article: *de*.

	♂ / ♀ neuter	
definite article	het	**singular**
indefinite article	een	
demonstrative	dit / dat	
definite article	de	**plural**
demonstrative	deze / die	

Some examples of Dutch nouns, with their respective definite articles, in its singular form. Followed by the singular diminutives that belong to these nouns with the article: *het*. These are followed by the plural diminutives which are all preceded by the definite article: *de*.

noun gender	Dutch example singular noun	Dutch example indefinite article	Dutch example singular diminutive	English translation	Dutch example plural diminutive
m	de kaas	een kaasje	het kaasje	the small cheese	de kaasjes
n	het bureau	een bureautje	het bureautje	the small desk	de bureautjes
m	de bal	een balletje	het balletje	the small ball	de balletjes
m	de boom	een boompje	het boompje	the small tree	de boompjes
f	de woning	een woninkje	het woninkje	the small house	de woninkjes
n	het menu	een menu	het menuutje	the little menu	de menuutjes

m = masculine; f = feminine; n = neutral

N.B.: Diminutives are also used to express negative feelings. The diminutive is then used in a pejorative manner in order to belittle an individual, its achievements or possessions.

Duplicating final vowels in diminutives

When a noun ends in a long vowel sound, represented by either: *a*, *e*, *o* or *u*; like the noun: *menu* in the example here above. That noun will be transformed into a diminutive by adding the diminutive suffix *-tje*. In such a case the vowel will be **duplicated**. Thus one writes: *menuutje*. This is because the suffix closes the last syllable while the long vowel sound must be maintained.

5   Diminutives

Diminutives are formed by adding a diminutive suffix. These suffixes are: *-je*, *-tje*, *-etje*, *-pje*, and *-kje*. The charts here show when each suffix is used.

Suffix	IPA	Letter(s)	Remark(s)	Example	Diminutive	Plural	Translation
-je	t	d / t		bad	badje	badjes	bath
	f	f		straf	strafje	strafjes	punishment
	ɣ / χ	g / ch		dag	dagje	dagjes	day
	k	k		dak	dakje	dakjes	roof
	p	p		schaap	schaapje	schaapjes	sheep
	s	s		kaas	kaasje	kaasjes	cheese
[jə]	ks	x		fax	faxje	faxjes	fax

Suffix	IPA	Letter(s)	Remark(s)	Example	Diminutive	Plural	Translation
-tje	aː	a	*This **is** a **long** vowel sound!*	vla	vlaatje	vlaatjes	custard
	eː	e	*This **is** a **long** vowel sound!*	zee	zeetje	zeetjes	sea
	i / iː	ie / y	*This **is** a **long** vowel sound!*	knie	knietje	knietjes	knee
	oː	o / eau	*This **is** a **long** vowel sound!*	bureau	bureautje	bureautjes	desk
	y	u	*This **is** a **long** vowel sound!*	menu	menuutje	menuutjes	menu
	l	l	*When preceded by a **long** vowel sound!*	paal	paaltje	paaltjes	pole
	n	n	*When preceded by a **long** vowel sound!*	baan	baantje	baantjes	job
[tjə]	r / ɾ / ʁ	r	*When preceded by a **long** vowel sound!*	haar	haartje	haartjes	hair

Suffix	IPA	Letter(s)	Remark(s)	Example	Diminutive	Plural	Translation
-etje	l	l	*When preceded by a **short** vowel sound!*	bal	balletje	balletjes	ball
	m	m	*When preceded by a **short** vowel sound!*	dam	dammetje	dammetjes	dam
	n	n	*When preceded by a **short** vowel sound!*	kan	kannetje	kannetjes	jug
	r / ɾ / ʁ	r	*When preceded by a **short** vowel sound!*	kar	karretje	karretjes	cart
[ə.tjə]	ŋ	ng	*When preceded by a **short** vowel sound!*	slang	slangetje	slangetjes	snake

Suffix	IPA	Letter(s)	Remark(s)	Example	Diminutive	Plural	Translation
-pje	m	m	*When preceded by a **long** vowel sound!*	boom	boompje	boompjes	tree
				raam	raampje	raampjes	window
				zeem	zeempje	zeempjes	shammy
				kostuum	kostuumpje	kostuumpjes	costume
[pjə]				riem	riempje	riempjes	belt

Suffix	IPA	Letter(s)	Remark(s)	Example	Diminutive	Plural	Translation
-kje	ŋ	ng	When a noun contains more than one syllable and the stress is on the syllable which precedes directly the closing syllable *-ing*; the diminutive suffix will be *-kje*. The g of ng will be crossed off purely for pronunciation purposes.	woning	woninkje	woninkjes	dwelling
				mening	meninkje	meninkjes	opinion
				pudding	puddinkje	puddinkjes	pudding
				beslissing	beslissinkje	beslissinkjes	decision
[kjə]				haring	harinkje	harinkjes	herring

6   Countable and uncountable nouns

There are roughly two types of nouns: *countable* and *uncountable* nouns. The countable nouns are most common, these nouns can get pluralised and also singularised; in contrast to uncountable nouns. A countable noun is simply the name of: *a human being*, *an animal* or *a thing* and these can be counted. For example: *one man*, *two men*, *three men*, etc. An uncountable noun is usually the name of an inaminate homogeneous substance or a concept which does not have a countable unit or it is the name of a specific group of substances of a similar sort or type.

Examples of countable and uncountable nouns:

uncountable		*countable*		
singular English noun	**singular Dutch noun**	**singular English noun**	**singular Dutch noun**	**plural Dutch noun**
bread	brood	sandwich	boterham	boterhammen
fruit	fruit	apple	appel	appels
dairy	zuivel	cheese	kaas	kazen
meat	vlees	sausage	worst	worsten
money	geld	coin	munt	munten
interior	interieur	table	tafel	tafels

> N.B.: Although a noun is uncountable in English; it might be countable in Dutch and vice versa! A decent dictionary might be a good aid in case of doubt.

Uncountable nouns can be made '*countable*', accordingly as in English, by adding a quantifier of a sort; which is either a material adjective or a noun. Together these elements create a compound noun of which the quanitfier usually forms the final part of the compound noun. However, a select number of *uncountable nouns* can be transformed into *countable nouns* by reforming the uncountable noun into a diminutive; of which *biertje* (glass of beer) and *wijntje* (glass of wine) are perhaps the best known examples.

uncountable		*countable*		
singular English noun	**singular Dutch noun**	**singular English noun**	**singular Dutch noun**	**plural Dutch noun**
rise	rijst	grain of rise	rijstkorrel	rijstkorrels
water	water	drops of water	waterdruppel	waterdruppels
beer	bier	glass of beer	glas bier* / biertje	glazen bier / biertjes
wine	wijn	glass of wine	glas wijn* / wijntje	glazen wijn / wijntjes
pasta	pasta	sort of pasta	pastasoort	pastasoorten

* *glas bier* and *glas wijn* should not be confused with *either: bierglas* or *wijnglas*. The latter are respectively: a *beer glass* and a *wine glass*.

7 Compound nouns

A compound noun is a noun which has been constructed with two (or more) nouns, forming one new noun. An example is: *football team.* A *football team* is not just a team, it is a team of *football players.* Either: *team*, *football* and *player* are nouns, but they form new concepts together. The first part of a compound is specifying the latter part.

Ways to recognise a compound noun:

1. *A compound is constructed by two (or more) true words; most are nouns, some are verbs or adjectives, some are even numerals, digits, abbreviations or word groups.*

2. *A compound noun can be preceded as a whole by an article and when it is pluralised only the latter part of the compound is pluralised.*

Compound nouns in Dutch are formed in a similar fashion. Although Dutch compound nouns are always joined together into one new word. Like in English only the latter part of the compound is pluralised. It is also the latter part of the compound that decides the compound's grammatical gender.

By forming compound nouns it is possible to form very precise descriptions. A funny example would be: a *desktop's drawer handle* (Dutch: *bureauladehandvat*). In Dutch compound nouns are always written joined together as often as possible; which makes it possible to write extremely long nouns. There are however two rules for these compound nouns that make the spelling a tad easier.

1. *If you feel that a compound noun becomes too long (and therefore difficult to read) you are allowed to write a hyphen between the two parts.*

2. *If there will occur a vowel collision, which might form a diphthong together or pair two identical vowels, you are obliged to write a hyphen.*

Compound nouns are usually not listed in dictionaries. Only the human mind forms a limit to the number of possible compounds. Writing extensive nouns is for some people a form of linguistic enjoyment; the longer the noun, the better.

noun gender	Dutch singular compound noun	English singular compound noun
n	boek	book
n	woordenboek	dictionary
n	jargonwoordenboek	jargon dictionary
n	oud-jargonwoordenboek	old-jargon dictionary
n	linguïsten-oud-jargonwoordenboek	linguists' old-jargon dictionary
	et cetera	*et cetera*

Due to the influence of the English language many native speakers experience problems in following the spelling rules correctly and often write the compounds loose. This phenomenon is nicknamed by purists as: *the English disease.*

There are roughly nine types of compound nouns. Here follows a list with some examples.

type of compound noun	Dutch example	English translation
compounds constructed with: *two (or more) nouns*	boekenkast	book closet
compounds constructed with: *adjectives*	rodekool	red cabbage
compounds constructed with: *digits*	1-aprilgrap	April fool's joke
compounds constructed with: *abbreviations*	tv-programma	tv programme
compounds constructed with: *elements of equal value*	zwart-witfoto	black-and-white photo
compounds constructed with: *names*	kabinetten-Churchill	Churchill ministries
compounds constructed with: *a word group*	twee-onder-een-kapwoning	semi-detached house
compounds constructed with: *a sentence*	ik-vermoord-je-blik	"I'm going to kill you" face
compounds constructed with: *a specifier*	niet-lid	non member

Misspelled compound nouns are a significant part of spelling mistakes made by native speakers. The misspelled compound nouns can be interpreted as a construction of an adjective or a verb combined with a noun; which can result in hilarious mistakes.

A well known example to indicate the importance of spelling compound nouns correctly is about *glasses for red wine*. In Dutch one would write: *rodewijnglazen*; to describe wine glasses which are specifically meant for red wine. However when erroneously written as: *rode wijnglazen*, it would mean that the wine glasses are red themselves, rather than the wine glasses are meant for red wine. This is because *red* functions as an adjective for the compound noun when written loose.

Another great example is the *long distance runner*. In Dutch one wrould write: *langeafstandsloper* to describe a sportsman who is capable of running long distances. However it is not uncommon to encounter the spelling: *lange afstandsloper*, which indicates that the runner himself is a tall man.

Some might enjoy to play with these adjectives and compound nouns. What to think of the construction: *witte rodewijnglazen* or *kleine langeafstandsloper*? respectively they mean: *white glasses for red wine* and *a long distance runner who is little.*

For the sake of linguistic pleasure one last example. On 2 November 2007 the local newspaper of the Dutch city Gouda wrote that the Dutch minister of transport wanted to allow 17 year olds to take a driver's test in order to get their driver's license. The headline however stated something completely different: *Rijbewijs voor zeventien jarigen.* The compound noun *zeventienjarigen* (seventeen year olds) was misspelled. The headline literally read: *Driver's license for seventeen people who have their birthday.* This is because *jarigen* is the plural for *jarige*, which means; someone who is having his birthday.

Part II. Pluralising Dutch nouns

8 Vowels: Long and short

The Dutch spelling is based on the pronunciation of the Dutch language. In Dutch there are two types of vowels. Long and short vowel sounds.

The difference between a long and a short vowel sound also makes the difference in meaning when used in a word. For example the word: *boom* [boːm] (tree) and the word: *bom* [bɔm] (bomb). Long vowel sounds can occur in both closed and open syllables. While short vowels only occur in closed syllables; with one exception the schwa [ə].

9 Syllables: Open and closed

In closed syllables, these are syllables that are closed with a consonant, long vowel sounds are represented by two identical vowels. Like in the example: *boom* (tree). A short vowel sound is represented by a single vowel.

In open syllables long vowel sounds are always represented by a single vowel. Like in the example *po* [poː] (chamber pot). However there's one exception. When a word ends in an open syllable with a long vowel sound [eː] this vowel will be written as: *-ee*. A good example is: *zee* [zeː] (sea). This is to avoid confusion with the schwa [ə] which is used extensively in Dutch.

syllable type	vowel type	example	IPA
open	long	ro	roː
	short	-	-
closed	long	rook	roːk
	short	rok	rɔk

Open syllables do not end in a short vowel sound. There's only one exception! An open vowel can end with the short and unstressed: e [ə], known as the schwa, like in: the definite article *de* [də] (the) and the unstressed personal pronouns: *je* [jə] (you), *ze* [zə] (she / they) and *we* [ʋə] (we).

10 Pluralising and singularising nouns in Dutch

10.1 The pluralisation suffix -en

Pluralising nouns with -en

In Dutch one can easily pluralise most nouns by simply adding the pluralisation suffix: *-en*. Though, because this suffix is added, it will also influence the pronunciation of the noun. This is because the suffix *-en* starts with a schwa [ə] and needs therefore to be preceded by a consonant. A schwa can only start a new syllable when the previous syllable ends in a vowel (*a, e, i, o, u, y*) or a digraph (*ch, ng, nk, au, ei, eu, ie, ij, oe, ou, ui*).

Thus, if the suffix *-en* is added to a noun, which ends in a consonant; like in the example: *boom*. The suffix *-en* will form a new syllable (**boom + -en**) and the consonant of the previous syllable will move over to the last syllable preceding the schwa (**boo + -men**).

The vowel [oː] should always remain maintained; also in a pluralised noun. Thus then we follow the rule of the open and closed syllables. A long vowel sound in an open syllable should be represented by a single vowel. Thus in the example (**boom + -en**) one *o* should be crossed off. Thus, one should write the plural of *boom* as: *bomen* [ˈboː.mə(n)].

Maintaining the pronunciation of the vowel is important and thus also when there's a short vowel sound in a closed syllable. The example of the word: *bom* will illustrate the rule perfectly. If one adds the suffix *-en* to a noun that ends in a *closed syllable* - containing a **short vowel sound** - the consonant of that closed syllable will also move to the pluralisation syllable to precede the schwa (**bo + -men**). However this would change the pronunciation of the vowel, because the first vowel - which was initially a **short vowel** - has become a **long vowel**. To solve this problem one identical consonant is added, which results in our example to the spelling: *bommen* [ˈbɔm.ə(n)]. This system is not only used for nouns, but for *all* words in the Dutch language.

10.2   Singurlarising nouns by removing -en

Singularising nouns with long vowel sounds

In Dutch one can easily singularise most nouns by removing the pluralisation suffix: -*en* (**bomen** - **-en**). After removing the pluralisation suffix one must restore the proper pronunciation of the vowel. To avoid that a **long vowel sound** will be read as its **short** counterpart (*after the removal of the pluralisation suffix*) one must restore the proper pronunciation of the vowel. Since the first syllable is now closed by the consonant that preceded the schwa [ə]. To maintain the **long vowel sound** the actual vowel should be doubled.

phase in the singularisation process	spelling	IPA
plural noun	bomen	[ˈboː.mə(n)]
removal of -*en*	bom	[bɔm]
restoration of the vowel sound	boom	[boːm]

Singularising nouns with short vowel sounds

In Dutch one can easily singularise most nouns by removing the pluralisation suffix: -*en* (**bommen** - **-en**). Singularising nouns containing short vowels is easy since the pronunciation won't be influenced by the removal of -*en*. Though, when the pluralisation suffix gets removed it will leave one additional identical consonant which has become unnecessary because it doesn't have to precede the schwa [ə] any longer and thus to maintain the short vowel sound the additional consonant should be removed.

phase in the singularisation process	spelling	IPA
plural noun	bommen	[ˈbɔm.ə(n)]
removal of -*en*	bomm*	[bɔm]
restoration of the spelling	bom	[boːm]

* *bomm* is an ungrammatical spelling and is used here solely to illustrate the process of singularisation.

10.3   Voiceless and voiced consonants

Pluralisation with the voiceless and voiced consonants

The voiceless letters f and s can't follow a long vowel sound (a, e, i, o, u) sound
or the vowel digraphs: ij, ei, au, ou, ie, oe, eu and ui while preceding a schwa
[ə]. Therefore these consonants should be replaced by their voiced counterparts:
v and z. These examples will show you how the rule works.

singular English noun	singular Dutch noun		pluralisation suffix		plural Dutch noun
pigeon	duif	+	-en	→	duiven
raven	raaf	+	-en	→	raven
pussycat	poes	+	-en	→	poezen
cheese	kaas	+	-en	→	kazen
price/prize	prijs	+	-en	→	prijzen
sauce	saus	+	-en	→	sauzen

N.B.: A very small selection of nouns don't follow this rule! *paus* (pope) →
pausen (popes) and *kous* (stocking) → *kousen* (stockings).

Singularisation with the voiceless and voiced consonants

When either v or z - beginning the final syllable containing the pluralisation
suffix *-en* - is preceded by an open syllable ending in a long vowel sound or a
vowel digraph (ij, ei, au, ou, ie, oe, eu, ui), v and z are respectively replaced by
their voiceless counterparts f and s.

10.4 Vowel collision due to the pluralisation suffix

10.4.1 Stress on another syllable than the final syllable ending in -ie

Because most nouns in Dutch are pluralised with the suffix *-en* a vowel collision can occur. Vowel collisions can occur when the suffix *-en* is preceded by: *ee* or *ie*. To avoid confusion the following rules are used. When a noun ends in *-ee* a diaeresis (¨) is written on the *e* of the *-en* suffix and together they'll form the particle: *-eeën* ['eː.jə(n)]. An example could be: *zee* [zeː] (sea) which is pluralised as: *zeeën*. If a noun ends in *-ie* and the stress of the noun is not on the *-ie*, only an *-n* will be added to form the plural. Yet, a diaeresis should be written to indicate that the *i* and the *e* do not form the vowel digraph *ie* together. Then the particle will be: *-iën* ['iː.jə(n)].

singular English noun	singular Dutch noun		pluralisation suffix		plural Dutch noun
bacterium	bacterie	+	-n	→	bacteriën
colony	kolonie	+	-n	→	koloniën
ring of a coat of mail	malie	+	-n	→	maliën
pore	porie	+	-n	→	poriën

10.4.2 Stress on the final syllable ending in -ie

If a noun ends in *-ie* and the stress of the noun is on the final syllable containing the *-ie* particle, the pluralisation suffix *-en* will be added and a diaeresis will be written on the *e* of the pluralisation suffix; together they'll form the particle: *-ieën* ['iː.jə(n)]. This particle sounds exactly like the particle: *-iën*. One can easily imagine that confusing these two particles is not uncommon; even among native speakers.

singular English noun	singular Dutch noun		pluralisation suffix		plural Dutch noun
ceremony	ceremonie	+	-en	→	ceremonieën
theory	theorie	+	-en	→	theorieën
knee	knie	+	-en	→	knieën
melody	melodie	+	-en	→	melodieën

10.5   The pluralisation suffix -s

Pluralisation with -s after -e, -el, -em, -en and -er

In Dutch there are also nouns that are pluralised with the pluralisation suffix *-s*. Singular nouns that contain more than one syllable and end in: *-e*, *-el*, *-em*, *-en* and *-er* usually get pluralised by adding *-s*. Loanwords from both English and French are usually pluralised by adding *-s* as well.

singular English noun	singular Dutch noun		pluralisation suffix		plural Dutch noun
table	tafel	+	-s	→	tafels
windmill	molen	+	-s	→	molens
printer	printer	+	-s	→	printers
broom	bezem	+	-s	→	bezems
pub	café	+	-s	→	cafés
present/gift	cadeau	+	-s	→	cadeaus

Pluralisation with -'s after a vowel

Nouns that ends in: *-a*, *-i*, *-o*, *-u* or *-y* are pluralised by adding the pluralisation suffix: *-'s* to the noun. The apostrophe prevents doubling of the vowel when *s* closes the syllable.

singular English noun	singular Dutch noun		pluralisation suffix		plural Dutch noun
motorcar	auto	+	-'s	→	auto's
diploma	diploma	+	-'s	→	diploma's
car battery	accu	+	-'s	→	accu's
taxi	taxi	+	-'s	→	taxi's
baby	baby	+	-'s	→	baby's

N.B.: Although the apostrophe in combination with the *s* can transform a noun into a genitive, one can safely assume that the particle *-'s* is used to pluralise a noun. In Dutch one tends to transform solely personal names into genitives.

10.6   Nouns with a Latin or Greek origin

10.6.1   Pluralisation of nouns ending in -um or -us

The singularisation suffixes of nouns with a Latin or Greek origin that ends in:
-*um* [ʏm] or -*us* [ʏs] are replaced by their respective pluralisation counterparts:
-*a* [a] and -*i* [i].

singular English noun	singular Dutch noun		pluralisation suffix		plural Dutch noun
laboratory	laboratorium	+	-a	→	laboratoria
stage	podium	+	-a	→	podia
city centre	stadscentrum	+	-a	→	stadscentra
museum	museum	+	-a	→	musea
gymnasium	gymnasium	+	-a	→	gymnasia
jubilee	jubileum	+	-a	→	jubilea
physician	medicus	+	-i	→	medici
doctorandus	doctorandus	+	-i	→	doctorandi
historian	historicus	+	-i	→	historici
alumnus	alumnus	+	-i	→	alumni
diabetic	diabeticus	+	-i	→	diabetici
chemist	chemicus	+	-i	→	chemici

N.B.: Due to the ongoing language simplification and standardisation, which occurs because of a laconic and slothful attitude towards correct spelling and grammar, almost all these nouns can be pluralised by the pluralisation suffix -*en* as well. There is no doubt that a pluralisation with the -*en* suffix for these types of nouns is considered less desirable and a sign of poor language skills by many.

10.6.2   Exceptions

The nouns: *circus*, *cursus* (course), *prospectus*, *rebus*, *virus* and *octopus* are not pluralised according the regular pluralisation rules for nouns of Latin or Greek origin. These nouns are pluralised by adding the standard pluralisation suffix *-en*. These plurals are: *circussen*, *cursussen*, *prospectussen*, *rebussen*, *virussen* and *octopussen*.

The noun: *catalogus* (catalog) is, in contrast with its ending in -us, pluralised with the suffix *-i*; but can also get pluralised by adding *-en*. The plural: *catalogi* is certainly preferred in formal writing. Although the plural: *catalogussen* is frequently used.

The homonymous noun: *medium* has two different plural forms: *media* and *mediums*. The plural *mediums* is used for people who claim to possess a sixth sense. The plural *media* is used for all other meanings.

10.6.3   Botanical names

Botanical names are often derived from Latin words. Plants like: *geranium*, *krokus*, *cyclamen*, *hibiscus* and *anthurium* are exempt from the regular pluralisation rule for nouns of Latin or Greek origin. These nouns are usually pluralised with the pluralisation suffixes *-s* and *-en*. Thus the plurals are: *geraniums*, *hibiscussen*, and *anthuriums*.

10.7   Nouns with a German origin

A very limited number of nouns of German origin have the particle -*eren* [ə.rə(n)] as pluralisation suffix; which is formed by two syllables: a schwa [ə] followed by the syllable *ren* [rə(n)]. Because the first schwa of -*eren* must be preceded by a consonant (*which will be taken from the preceding syllable*) the rules for open and closed syllables (*containing either short or long vowel sounds*) must be followed here. Unfortunately there are no further guidelines or rules. One should learn these words by heart.

singular English noun	singular Dutch noun	pluralisation suffix		plural Dutch noun
child	kind	+ -eren	→	kinderen
leaf (of a tree)	blad	+ -eren	→	bladeren
lamb	lam	+ -eren	→	lammeren
egg	ei	+ -eren	→	eieren
calf	kalf	+ -eren	→	kalveren
song	lied	+ -eren	→	liederen
good	goed	+ -eren	→	goederen
people	volk	+ -eren	→	volkeren
piece of clothing	kleed[*I]	+ -eren	→	klederen
wheel	rad[*II]	+ -eren	→	raderen
mind	gemoed	+ -eren	→	gemoederen

[*I]   *kleed* and its plural *klederen* are considered archaic these days and are seldom used.

[*II]   *rad* is not a wheel of a car, but it is a transportation wheel; e.g.: a *water wheel*.

10.8   Ruled exceptions

10.8.1   The consonant doesn't get duplicated

A consonant is usually duplicated when it's preceded by a short vowel sound and followed by a pluralisation suffix (*-en, -n, -s, -'s* and *-eren*) which contains the schwa [ə]. However there are some exceptions to this rule. Most exceptions are irregular and should be learnt by heart. Although, there is a certain number of exceptions which follow a specific rule.

There's no duplication of the consonant when the consonant is preceded by the following short vowel sounds: *e* (*when pronounced as a schwa* [ə]*; or when it's not pronounced at all*) and *i* [ɪ], while the stress of the noun is neither on the preceding, nor on the final syllable of the word. In the examples underneath the stressed syllables are underlined.

final particle	IPA	singular Dutch noun	IPA transcription	singular English noun	plural Dutch noun
-el	[ʼl]	engel	[ˈɛng.ʼl]	angel	engelen
-es	[əs]	dreumes	[ˈdrøː.məs]	toddler	dreumesen
		luiwammes	[ˈlœy.ʋɑ^m.məs]	sluggard	luiwammesen
-ik	[ɪk]	dommerik	[ˈdɔ^m.mə.rɪk]	stupid / fool	dommeriken
		havik	[ˈha.vɪk]	hawk	haviken
		leeuwerik	[ˈleːu̯.ʋə.rɪk]	lark	leeuweriken
		lomperik	[ˈlɔm.pə.rɪk]]	palooka	lomperiken
		monnik	[ˈmɔ^n.nɪk]	monk	moniken
		perzik	[ˈpɛr.zɪk]	peach	perziken
		stommerik	[ˈstɔ^m.mə.rɪk]	dummy / idiot	stommeriken
		viezerik	[ˈviː.zə.rɪk]	dirty fellow	viezeriken
-it	[ɪt]	kievit	[ˈki.vɪt]	lapwing	kieviten
		lemmet	[ˈlɛ^m.mət]	knife blade	lemmeten

10.8.2   Short sounding vowels turn into long sounding vowels

Usually when a singular noun has either a *long* or a *short vowel sound* this sound will remain also in the plural noun. But in several cases this is <u>not</u> what is happening when the singular noun gets pluralised. There is not a good reason for this phenomenon. The most likely explanation is that all these nouns are very regularly used and have got an irregular plural through the centuries; perhaps because of phonaesthetics.

What is happening? **Singular nouns** with a *short vowel sound* tend to replace that short vowel sound for a *long vowel sound* once the noun is pluralised. For unknown reasons the consonant that closes the closed syllable is not doubled but just moves to the next syllable to precede the schwa [ə] in the *-en* suffix. This causes that the once closed syllable is suddenly open and thus the vowel is pronounced long. In some cases it is not even the long sounding counterpart that appears but a whole other long sounding vowel.

Let us look at this example, the noun: bad [bɑd] (bath(tub)). It is a monosyllabic noun and it contains a short vowel sound. But when it gets pluralised it becomes a polysyllabic noun due to the addition of the pluralisation suffix *-en*. Usually the closing consonant would be doubled in order to maintain the short vowel sound in the first syllable, forming - in this very case - the plural noun: *badden*; which does ***not*** exist. This is because a number of nouns do not follow the general rule; these are known as: *irregular nouns*.

In this section there are five tables that will show you such a change due to the pluralisation of the nouns. These tables will show you most irregular nouns in Dutch. Unfortunately, there are no rules for this exception. These nouns must be learnt by heart.

The examples in the table underneath show that the sound [ɑ] is replaced by the sound [aː]. The initial vowel and its long sounding counterpart are underlined.

singular English noun	singular Dutch noun		pluralisation suffix		plural Dutch noun
bath(tub)	b<u>a</u>d	+	-en	→	b<u>a</u>den
magazine / sheet	bl<u>a</u>d	+	-en	→	bl<u>a</u>den
day	d<u>a</u>g	+	-en	→	d<u>a</u>gen
roof	d<u>a</u>k	+	-en	→	d<u>a</u>ken
valley	d<u>a</u>l	+	-en	→	d<u>a</u>len
hole	g<u>a</u>t	+	-en	→	g<u>a</u>ten
glass	gl<u>a</u>s	+	-en	→	gl<u>a</u>zen
path	p<u>a</u>d	+	-en	→	p<u>a</u>den
water(wheel)	r<u>a</u>d	+	-en	→	r<u>a</u>den
battle	sl<u>a</u>g	+	-en	→	sl<u>a</u>gen
barrel	v<u>a</u>t	+	-en	→	v<u>a</u>ten
treaty / pact	verdr<u>a</u>g	+	-en	→	verdr<u>a</u>gen

In these examples the sound [ɛ] is replaced by the sound [eː]. The initial vowel and its long sounding counterpart are underlined.

singular English noun	singular Dutch noun		pluralisation suffix		plural Dutch noun
road	weg	+	-en	→	wegen
order / command	bevel	+	-en	→	bevelen
prayer	gebed	+	-en	→	gebeden
deficiency	gebrek	+	-en	→	gebreken
gene (DNA)	gen	+	-en	→	genen
game	spel	+	-en	→	spelen

In these examples the sound [ɔ] is replaced by the sound [oː]. The initial vowel and its long sounding counterpart are underlined.

singular English noun	singular Dutch noun		pluralisation suffix		plural Dutch noun
command (religious)	gebod	+	-en	→	geboden
god	god	+	-en	→	goden
duke	hertog	+	-en	→	hertogen
(court) of law / courtyard	hof	+	-en	→	hoven
hole / cavern	hol	+	-en	→	holen
lotery ticket	lot	+	-en	→	loten
war	oorlog	+	-en	→	oorlogen
lock	slot	+	-en	→	sloten
ban / prohibition	verbod	+	-en	→	verboden
leave / furlough	verlof	+	-en	→	verloven
shot / gun shot	schot	+	-en	→	schoten

In these examples the sound [ɪ] is replaced by the sound [eː]. The initial vowel and its long sounding replacement are underlined.

singular English noun	singular Dutch noun		pluralisation suffix		plural Dutch noun
member	lid	+	-en	→	leden
ship	schip	+	-en	→	schepen
blacksmith	smid	+	-en	→	smeden

In this example the sound [ɑ] is replaced by the sound [eː]. The initial vowel and its long sounding replacement are underlined.

singular English noun	singular Dutch noun		pluralisation suffix		plural Dutch noun
city	stad	+	-en	→	steden

10.8.3   The suffix -heid changes into -heden.

A certain number of Dutch nouns end in *-heid* when in its plural form. However when the noun gets pluralised this suffix will be transformed into the pluralisation suffix: *-heden.*

The rule that *-heid* changes into *-heden* is of course just a rule of thumb. In reality there's a more complex phonetic reason for this change.

The closed end syllable and suffix *-heid* is pronounced as: [ɦɛɪd]. This syllable is used solely for nouns in the singular form. The addition of the actual pluralisation suffix [ə(n)] causes the *-d* of *-heid* to move to the pluralisation suffix, forming the new end syllable: [də(n)]. This means that the closed end syllable and suffix *-heid* changes into *-hei-*. It has become an open syllable and an infix, followed by the new end syllable *-den.* In those cases the vowel digraph *ei* [ɛɪ] is changed into a an *e* [eː], forming the construction: *-heden* [ɦeː.də(n)].

singular English noun	singular Dutch noun		pluralisation suffix		plural Dutch noun
celebrity	bekendheid	+	-en	→	bekendheden
opportunity / occasion	gelegenheid	+	-en	→	gelegenheden
difficulty	moeilijkheid	+	-en	→	moeilijkheden
authorities / government	overheid	+	-en	→	overheden
beauty	schoonheid	+	-en	→	schoonheden
speed / velocity	snelheid	+	-en	→	snelheden
responsibility	verantwoordelijkheid	+	-en	→	verantwoordelijkheden
friendliness	vriendelijkheid	+	-en	→	vriendelijkheden
freedom	vrijheid	+	-en	→	vrijheden
truth	waarheid	+	-en	→	waarheden
reality	werkelijkheid	+	-en	→	werkelijkheden
wisdom	wijsheid	+	-en	→	wijsheden

10.8.4 Nouns ending in -man

Several nouns that describe people's professions end in the syllable *-man*; e.g.: *zakenman* (business man). Many of these nouns have three possible plurals; these are: *-mannen*; *-lieden* and *-lui*. The latter two possibilities are these days somewhat less common, where *-lieden* is considered formal and more proper than *-lui* which is considered informal and colloquial.

singular English noun	singular Dutch noun	plural with -mannen	plural with -lieden	plural with -lui
businessman	zakenman	zakenmannen	zakenlieden	zakenlui
tradesman	handelsman	handelsmannen	handelslieden	handelslui
merchant	koopman	koopmannen	kooplieden	kooplui
carpenter	timmerman	timmermannen	timmerlieden	timmerlui
artisan	ambachtsman	ambachtsmannen	ambachtslieden	ambachtslui
boatswain	bootsman	bootsmannen	bootslieden	bootslui
seaman	zeeman	zeemannen	zeelieden	zeelui
ferryman	veerman	veermannen	veerlieden	veerlui
workman	werkman	werkmannen	werklieden	werklui
firefighter	brandweerman	brandweermannen	brandweerlieden	brandweerlui
office worker	kantoorman	kantoormannen	kantoorlieden	kantoorlui
statesman	staatsman	staatsmannen	staatslieden	staatslui
professional	vakman	vakmannen	vaklieden	vaklui
resistance fighter	verzetsman	verzetsmannen	verzetslieden	verzetslui

However certainly not all nouns that end in *-man* have plurals that end in *-lieden* or *-lui*. Although, all nouns that end in *-man* have a plural that ends in *-mannen*; which makes the choice for this particular plural form a safe and certain one.

N.B.: It is not uncommon to see that the syllable *-man* in these type of nouns is replaced by: *-vrouw*. However the plurals of these nouns are formed by adding the *-en* pluralisation suffix.

11   Homonyms with different plurals

Homonym is the antagonist of the term *synonym*. A synonym is a noun which has roughly the same meaning as another noun has. A homonym is a noun with two or more different meanings. Check out the example.

synonym:	◦ friend ◦ buddy ◦ pal ◦ mate	*A person attached to another by feelings of affection or personal regard.*

homonym:	◦ bat	*1*	*Flying mammals of the order Chiroptera, having modified forelimbs that serve as wings and are covered with a membranous skin extending to the hind limbs.*
		2	*The wooden club used in certain games, as baseball and cricket, to strike the ball.*

Homonyms in Dutch has often the same plural form for both meanings, but some homonyms have different plurals for their respective different meanings. Although, most homonyms in Dutch are also *homographs* (same spelling) and *homophones* (same pronunciation).

Dutch homonym	pluralisation suffix	irregular plural	plural Dutch noun	plural English noun
bal	-en -s		ballen bals	balls dance proms
blad	-eren -en	✓	bladeren bladen	leafs magazines
pad	-en -en	✓	padden paden	toads paths
portier	-en -s	✓	portieren portiers	car doors doorman
schot	-en -en	✓	schotten schoten	non-load bearing wall (gun) shots

12   Abbreviations

Abbreviations are shortened forms of: *names*, *words*, *word groups* or even *sentences*. Abbreviations can sometimes be pluralised as well. A very well known abbreviation is: *TV* (television). In English the abbreviation *TV* should be written in capital letters, a miniscule *s* should be added to form the plural *TVs*. In Dutch however the abbreviation is written in miniscule letters: *tv* (televisie) and the plural is formed by adding -*'s*; thus: *tv's*.

Dutch abbreviations are usually pluralised simply by adding *'s*, this is irrespective the actual pluralisation suffix that is used for the fully written form of the abbreviation. Abbreviations are considered as independent words and have their own plural forms. An example is the noun: *asielzoekerscentrum* (asylum seeker's centre) which is abbreviated as: *azc*. The noun is pluralised as: *asielzoekerscentra*, however the abbreviation is pluralised with: *'s*; thus: *azc's*.

When an abbreviation ends in the letter: *s*, the pluralisation suffix will be: -*en*. For example: *openbare basisschool* (public elementary school) is abbreviated as: *obs*, its plural is: *obs'en*.

Abbreviations that can be read as a word, like: *led* (light-emitting diode) is pluralised with the pluralisation suffix: -s; thus without the apostrophe. However the apostrophe is of course necessary when an abbreviation can be read as a word but ends in a long vowel sound; like: *soa* (STD: Sexually Transmitted Disease) which is pluralised as: *soa's*.

Dutch	Dutch abbreviation	Dutch plural abbreviation	English
televisie	tv	tv's	television
asielzoekerscentrum	azc	azc's	asylum seeker's centre
openbare basisschool	obs	obs'en	public elementary school
led: light-emitting diode	led	leds	led: light-emitting diode
seksueel overdraagbare aandoening	soa	soa's	sexually transmitted disease (STD)

Most abbreviations in Dutch are written with miniscule letters, only those abbreviations which are used for institutions and objects which are not commonly known are written with capitals.

Check abbreviations and their correct spelling at:

`http://www.afkorting.net`

Part III. Word list

This list contains almost all countable nouns that are used in the examples of this tutorial. It provides: the noun gender, the pluralisation suffix the plural form and the diminutive. Please note: this list can not replace an actual dictionary.

singular English noun	noun gender	singular Dutch noun	pluralisation suffix	plural Dutch noun	diminutive
alumnus	m	alumnus	-i	alumni	alumnusje
angel	m	engel	-en	engelen	engeltje
apple	m	appel	-s	appels	appeltje
April fool's joke	f	1-aprilgrap	-en	1-aprilgrappen	1-aprilgrapje
artisan	m	ambachtsman	-en	ambachtsmannen	ambachtsmannetje
aunt	f	tante	-s	tantes	tantetje
baby	m / f	baby	-'s	baby's	baby'tje
bacterium	f	bacterie	-n	bacteriën	bacterietje
ball	m	bal	-en	ballen	balletje
ban	n	verbod	-en	verboden	verbodje
barrel	n	vat	-en	vaten	vaatje
bath	n	bad	-en	baden	badje
battery (motorcar)	m	accu	-'s	accu's	accuutje
battle	m	slag	-en	slagen	slagje
beauty	f	schoonheid	-en	schoonheden	schoonheidje
bed	n	bed	-en	bedden	bedje
beer	n	biertje	-s	biertjes	-
belt	m	riem	-en	riemen	riempje
black-and-white photo	f	zwart-witfoto	-'s	zwart-witfoto's	zwart-witfotootje
blacksmith	m	smid	-en	smeden	smidje
boat	m / f	boot	-en	boten	bootje
boatswain	m	bootsman	-en	bootsmannen	bootsmannetje
bomb	m / f	bom	-en	bommen	bommetje
bone	n	bot	-en	botten	botje
book	n	boek	-en	boeken	boekje
book closet	f	boekenkast	-en	boekenkasten	boekenkastje
broom	m	bezem	-s	bezems	bezempje
businessman	m	zakenman	-en	zakenmannen	zakenmannetje
cafe	n	café	-s	cafés	cafeetje
calf	n	kalf	-eren	kalveren	kalfje
(motor)car	m	auto	-'s	auto's	autootje
carpenter	m	timmerman	-en	timmermannen	timmermannetje
cart	f	kar	-en	karren	karretje
celebrity	m / f	bekendheid	-en	bekendheden	bekendheidje
centre	n	centrum	-a	centra	centrumpje
ceremony	f	ceremonie	-en	ceremonieën	ceremonietje

singular English noun	noun gender	singular Dutch noun	pluralisation suffix	plural Dutch noun	diminutive
chair	m	stoel	-en	stoelen	stoeltje
chamber pot	m	po	-'s	po's	pootje
cheese	m	kaas	-en	kazen	kaasje
chemist	m / f	chemicus	-i	chemici	chemicusje
chicken	f	kip	-en	kippen	kipje
child	n	kind	-eren	kinderen	kindje
city	f	stad	-en	steden	stadje
city centre	n	stadscentrum	-a	stadscentra	stadscentrumpje
coin	f	munt	-en	munten	muntje
colony	f	kolonie	-n	koloniën	kolonietje
command	n	gebod	-n	geboden	gebodje
costume	n	kostuum	-s	kostuums	kostuumpje
court	n	hof	-en	hoven	hofje
cousin (f)	f	nicht	-en	nichten	nichtje
cousin (m)	m	neef	-en	neven	neefje
custard	f	vla	-'s	vla's	vlaatje
dam	f	dam	-en	dammen	dammetje
daughter	f	dochter	-s	dochters	dochtertje
day	m	dag	-en	dagen	dagje
decision	f	beslissing	-en	beslissingen	beslissinkje
deficiency	n	gebrek	-en	gebreken	gebrekje
desk	n	bureau	-s	bureaus	bureautje
diabetic	m / f	diabeticus	-i	diabetici	diabeticusje
dictionary	n	woordenboek	-en	woordenboeken	woordenboekje
difficulty	f	moeilijkheid	-en	moeilijkheden	moeilijkheidje
diploma	n	diploma	-'s	diploma's	diplomaatje
dirty fellow	m	viezerik	-en	viezeriken	vezerikje
doctorandus	m / f	doctorandus	-i	doctorandi	doctorandusje
dog	m	hond	-en	honden	hondje
door	f	deur	-en	deuren	deurtje
door (car)	n	portier	-en	portieren	portiertje
doorman / porter	m / f	portier	-s	portiers	portiertje
duke	m	hertog	-en	hertogen	hertogje
dummy / idiot	m	stommerik	-en	stommeriken	stommerikje
dwelling	f	woning	-en	woningen	woninkje
egg	n	ei	-eren	eieren	eitje
father	m	vader	-s	vaders	vadertje
fax	f	fax	-en	faxen	faxje
ferryman	m	veerman	-en	veermannen	veermannetje
fire	n	vuur	-en	vuren	vuurtje
firefighter	m	brandweerman	-en	brandweermannen	brandweermannetje
freedom	f	vrijheid	-en	vrijheden	-
friendliness	f	vriendelijkheid	-en	vriendelijkheden	vriendelijkheidje
game	n	spel	-en	spellen	spelletje
gene	n	gen	-en	genen	gennetje
glass	n	glas	-en	glazen	glaasje
god	m	god	-en	goden	godje
good	n	goed	-eren	goederen	goedje

singular English noun	noun gender	singular Dutch noun	pluralisation suffix	plural Dutch noun	diminutive
government	*f*	overheid	-en	overheden	overheidje
grandfather	*m*	grootvader	-s	grootvaders	grootvadertje
grandmother	*f*	grootmoeder	-s	grootmoeders	grootmoedertje
gymnasium	*n*	gymnasium	-a	gymnasia	gymnasiumpje
hair	*n*	haar	-en	haren	haartje
hawk	*m*	havik	-en	haviken	havikje
herring	*m*	haring	-en	haringen	harinkje
historian	*m / f*	historicus	-i	historici	historicusje
hole	*n*	gat	-en	gaten	gaatje
hole / cavern	*n*	hol	-en	holen	holletje
job	*f*	baan	-en	banen	baantje
jubilee	*n*	jubileum	-a	jubilea	jubileumpje
jug	*f*	kan	-en	kannen	kannetje
kiss	*f*	kus	-en	kussen	kusje
knee	*f*	knie	-en	knieën	knietje
knife blade	*n*	lemmet	-en	lemmeten	lemmetje
laboratory	*n*	laboratorium	-a	laboratoria	laboratoriumpje
lamb	*n*	lam	-eren	lammeren	lammetje
lapwing	*m*	kievit	-en	kieviten	kievitje
lark	*m / f*	leeuwerik	-en	leeuweriken	leeuwerikje
leaf	*n*	blad	-eren	bladeren	blaadje
leave / furlough	*n*	verlof	-en	verloven	verlofje
lock	*n*	slot	-en	sloten	slotje
lotery ticket	*n*	lot	-en	loten	lotje
magazine	*n*	blad	-en	bladen	blaadje
melody	*f*	melodie	-en	melodieën	melodietje
member	*n*	lid	-en	leden	lidje
menu	*n*	menu	-'s	menu's	menuutje
merchant	*m*	koopman	-en	koopmannen	koopmannetje
mind	*n*	gemoed	-eren	gemoederen	gemoedje
monk	*m*	monnik	-en	monniken	monnikje
mother	*f*	moeder	-s	moeders	moedertje
museum	*n*	museum	-a	musea	museumpje
nephew	*m*	neef	-en	neven	neefje
niece	*f*	nicht	-en	nichten	nichtje
non-load bearing wall	*n*	schot	-en	schotten	schotje
nose	*m*	neus	-en	neuzen	neusje
office worker	*m*	kantoorman	-en	kantoormannen	kantoormannetje
opinion	*f*	mening	-en	meningen	meninkje
opportunity	*f*	gelegenheid	-en	gelegenheden	gelegenheidje
order	*n*	bevel	-en	bevelen	bevelletje
palooka	*m*	lomperik	-en	lomperiken	lomperikje
path	*n*	pad	-en	paden	paadje
people	*n*	volk	-eren	volkeren	volkje
peach	*m*	perzik	-en	perziken	perzikje
physician	*m / f*	medicus	-i	medici	medicusje
pigeon	*f*	duif	-en	duiven	duifje
pole	*m*	paal	-en	palen	paaltje

singular English noun	noun gender	singular Dutch noun	pluralisation suffix	plural Dutch noun	diminutive
pore	f	porie	-en	poriën	porietje
prayer	n	gebed	-en	gebeden	gebedje
present	n	cadeau	-s	cadeaus	cadeautje
price / prize	m	prijs	-en	prijzen	prijsje
printer	m	printer	-s	printers	printertje
professional	m	vakman	-en	vakmannen	vakmannetje
prom (dance)	n	bal	-s	bals	balletje
pudding	m	pudding	-en	puddingen	puddinkje
punishment	f	straf	-en	straffen	strafje
pussycat	f	poes	-en	poezen	poesje
raven	f	raaf	-en	raven	raafje
reality	f	realiteit	-en	realteiten	realiteitje
red cabbage	f	rodekool	-en	rodekolen	roodkooltje
resistance fighter	m	verzetsman	-en	verzetsmannen	verzetsmannetje
responsibility	f	verantwoordelijkheid	-en	verantwoordelijkheden	verantwoordelijkheidje
road	m	weg	-en	wegen	weggetje
roof	n	dak	-en	daken	dakje
sandwich	m / f	boterham	-en	boterhammen	boterhammetje
sausage	f	worst	-en	worsten	worstje
sea	f	zee	-en	zeeën	zeetje
seaman	m	zeeman	-en	zeemannen	zeemannetje
sheep	n	schaap	-en	schapen	schaapje
ship	n	schip	-en	schepen	schipje
(gun) shot	n	schot	-en	schoten	schotje
skirt	m	rok	-en	rokken	rokje
sluggard	m	luiwammes	-en	luiwammesen	luiwammesje
snake	f	slang	-en	slangen	slangetje
son	m	zoon	-en	zonen	zoontje
song	n	lied	-eren	liederen	liedje
speed / velocity	m	snelheid	-en	snelheden	snelheidje
stage	n	podium	-a	podia	podiumpje
statesman	m	staatsman	-en	staatsmannen	staatsmannetje
stupe / fool	m	dommerik	-en	dommeriken	dommerikje
sun	f	zon	-en	zonnen	zonnetje
sweater	f	trui	-en	truien	truitje
table	f	tafel	-s	tafels	tafeltje
taxi	m	taxi	-'s	taxi's	taxietje
television (TV)	m	televisie (tv)	-s	televisies (tv's)	televisietje (tv'tje)
theory	f	theorie	-en	theorieën	theorietje
toad	f	pad	-en	padden	padje
toddler	m / f	dreumes	-en	dreumesen	dreumesje
tradesman	m	handelsman	-en	handelsmannen	handelsmannetje
train	m	trein	-en	treinen	treintje
treaty / pact	n	verdrag	-en	verdragen	verdragje
tree	m	boom	-en	bomen	boompje
truth	m	waarheid	-en	waarheden	waarheidje
tv-programme	n	tv-programma	-'s	tv-programma's	tv-programmaatje
uncle	m	oom	-s	ooms	oompje
valley	n	dal	-en	dalen	dalletje
virgin	f	maagd	-en	maagden	maagdje

singular English noun	noun gender	singular Dutch noun	pluralisation suffix	plural Dutch noun	diminutive
war	m	oorlog	-en	oorlogen	oorlogje
water wheel	n	rad	-eren	raderen	radje
wheel	n	wiel	-en	wielen	wieltje
windmill	f	molen	-s	molens	molentje
window	n	raam	-en	ramen	raampje
wisdom	m	wijsheid	-en	wijsheden	wijsheidje
workman	m	werkman	-en	werkmannen	werkmannetje

Part IV. The end and perhaps a new begin!

13   Epilogue

I have had lots of pleasure making this tutorial about Dutch nouns. Creating it proved me once again that Dutch is a rich and extremely flexible and yet very well ruled language. Yes, there are exceptions but there are not so many. The Dutch language might be a bit of a pain when one starts learning it as a second language. But I think it is a great language. Of course, I am not unbiased; after all Dutch is my native language. But I do believe Dutch is certainly usable to create equally wonderful and breathtaking prose or poetry as you might be familiar with written in great and well spread languages like: English and French.

I do not want to claim that this tutorial is in any way complete. Dutch is a natural language and it is constantly evolving; which I, as a prescriptivist and purist, frequently regret. I might not have included all rules and most certainly not all exceptions. Although, If you find out that I have forgotten one or two rules; please forgive me. But I do claim that with this very tutorial you will be able to pluralise 99% of the Dutch nouns.

When you have reached this point and you have honestly and faithfully learnt *all* the rules and exceptions provided in this tutorial. Well, then you are ready to continue the journey that is named: *Learning Dutch!*

I wish you the best of luck.

Best regards,
Ron de Leeuw

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